



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

[FR ID: 17538]

Privacy Act of 1974; Matching Program

AGENCY: Federal Communications Commission.

ACTION: Notice of re-establishment of four matching programs.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended (“Privacy Act”), this document announces the establishment of computer matching programs the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC” or “Commission” or “Agency”) and the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) will conduct with the State of Missouri’s Department of Social Services (MDSS); North Carolina’s Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS); Pennsylvania’s Department of Human Services (PDHS); and Tennessee’s Department of Human Services (TDHS). (“Agencies”). The purpose of these four matching programs is to verify the eligibility of applicants to and subscribers of the Universal Service Fund (USF) Lifeline program, which is administered by USAC under the direction of the FCC. More information about these programs is provided in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below.

DATES: Written comments are due on or before [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]. This computer matching program will commence on [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER], and will conclude 18 months later.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Margaret Drake, FCC, 45 L Street NE, Washington, DC 20554, or Privacy@fcc.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Margaret Drake at 202-418-1707 or Privacy@fcc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Lifeline program provides support for discounted broadband and voice services to low-income consumers. Lifeline is administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) under FCC direction. Consumers qualify for Lifeline through proof of income or participation in a qualifying program, such as Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutritional

Assistance Program (SNAP), Federal Public Housing Assistance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit, and/or various Tribal-specific federal assistance programs. In a Report and Order adopted on March 31, 2016, the Commission ordered USAC to create a National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier (“National Verifier”), including the National Lifeline Eligibility Database (LED), that would match data about Lifeline applicants and subscribers with other data sources to verify the eligibility of an applicant or subscriber. The Commission found that the National Verifier would reduce compliance costs for Lifeline service providers, improve service for Lifeline subscribers, and reduce waste, fraud, and abuse in the program. The purpose of these particular matching programs is to verify Lifeline eligibility by establishing that applicants or subscribers in Missouri, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Tennessee are enrolled in the SNAP and/or Medicaid programs.

PARTICIPATING NON-FEDERAL AGENCIES:

- Missouri Department of Social Services (MDSS);
- North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS);
- Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (PDHS); and
- Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS)

AUTHORITY FOR CONDUCTING THE MATCHING PROGRAM:

47 U.S.C. 254; 47 CFR 54.400 et seq.; Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization, et al., Third Report and Order, Further Report and Order, and Order on Reconsideration, 31 FCC Rcd 3962, 4006-21, paras. 126-66 (2016) (2016 Lifeline Modernization Order).

PURPOSE(S):

In the 2016 Lifeline Modernization Order, the FCC required USAC to develop and operate the National Verifier to improve efficiency and reduce waste, fraud, and abuse in the Lifeline program. The stated purpose of the National Verifier is “to increase the integrity and improve the performance of the Lifeline program for the benefit of a variety of Lifeline participants, including Lifeline providers, subscribers, states, community-based organizations, USAC, and the Commission.” 31 FCC Rcd 3962, 4006, para. 126. To help determine whether Lifeline applicants and subscribers are eligible for Lifeline benefits, the Order contemplates that the USAC-operated LED will communicate with information systems and databases operated by other Federal and State agencies. *Id.* at 4011-2, paras. 135-7.

CATEGORIES OF INDIVIDUALS:

The categories of individuals whose information is involved in the four matching programs include, but are not limited to, those individuals (residing in a single household) who have applied for Lifeline benefits; are currently receiving Lifeline benefits; are individuals who enable another individual in their household to qualify for Lifeline benefits; are minors whose status qualifies a parent or guardian for Lifeline benefits; are individuals who have received Lifeline benefits; or are individuals acting on behalf of an eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) who have enrolled individuals in the Lifeline program.

CATEGORIES OF RECORDS:

The categories of records involved in the four matching programs include, but are not limited to, the last four digits of the Lifeline applicant's Social Security Number, date of birth, and first name and last name. The National Verifier will transfer these data elements to the Missouri DSS; North Carolina DHHS; Pennsylvania DHS and the Tennessee DHS which will respond either "yes" or "no" that the individual is enrolled in a Lifeline-qualifying assistance program: State of Missouri's SNAP and Medicaid; State of North Carolina's SNAP; State of Pennsylvania's SNAP and Medicaid; and State of Tennessee's SNAP.

SYSTEM(S) OF RECORDS:

The USAC records shared as part of this matching program reside in the Lifeline system of records, FCC/WCB-1, Lifeline Program, a notice of which the FCC published at 86 Fed. Reg. 11526 (Feb. 25, 2021).

Federal Communications Commission.

Marlene Dortch,

Secretary.

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